





Thursday Afternoon, Aug. 27th, 1891.

TWO DEETS.

BY GEORGE I. PUTNAM.

When Ashbel Dean died, and his earthly debts and credits were looked into, it was discovered that the credit page was nearly as spotless as the sheet that had covered Ashbel's still form, while mortgages for the full value of the farm were recorded on the other side. Ashbel had been considered foreclosed. His neighbors said he "speculated West," and were astonished when his death revealed the fact that he had sacrificed all in an endeavor to save some shreds of his financial reputation.

None were more surprised than his own family. This included the widow, and Amanda, and Israel, twins, twenty years old. They were crushed. They shrank from it as from the presence of the death—the first one in the family. For days they dared not speak of it, but it was always in their thoughts. At last the widow roused her energies, and summoned her children.

"We can save the farm," she said. "Manda, you can keep the district school; Israel and I will carry on the farm. We must all stand together."

For twenty years they were possessed of that one thought, urged by that motive— to pay the debt.

They stood together twenty years, and at the end of that time they owed no man anything.

The mother looked scarcely a day older. The work of directing had kept her faculties fresh and vigorous. But son and daughter had passed from anticipative youth into dulled middle age. The debt, unscrupulous andavaricious, had left them no enjoyment. It had robbed them of life's most desirable part.

When Amanda was twenty she was called pretty. Gatherings had been incomplete without her. After that, she never attended another. The attractions of young men, which came unsolicited, were refused. Now she had become thin and sallow. She knew she could hope for no return of love's pleasures. If a thought of marriage crowded itself upon her, she shook it off as unwelcome. She could give up her school now, and devote her time to home, to her mother and brother.

And Israel was free. He took a long breath and stood up straight, easing his galled shoulders of the burden they had just cut off. Life looked pleasant suddenly. He would make some needed improvements on the place. The house should have a coat of paint. He stood in the sunshine, and looking up through the June foliage of the maples, thought the seeds pods looked like the legs of so many little painters dangling there painting the sky. Then he laughed at himself, and said he must be getting young and frisky.

When he was twenty he had thought to be married. Now, at forty, he thought of it again. When he stopped his visit to Harriet Dower, she understood why. She had had no "company" to tell himself since then, and his heart gave a great bound at the thought. Why should he not?

One day he came to his mother and sister, and said, bluntly, "I am going to be married to Harriet Dower."

There was silence for a long moment; then his mother said coldly, "We know it."

By the tone and attitude, Israel understood that his mother and sister would not welcome the woman he meant to marry. He understood that they thought the tie of constant effort of the past twenty years as binding as wedlock, and did not wish it broken.

But once after that Israel spoke of his marriage: "I am to marry Harriet to-morrow. Shall you be there?"

And his mother answered, "No."

But Israel would keep his vow to Harriet. The twenty years struggle had cultivated in him the dogged resolution inherited from his mother.

He married Harriet, and after a week brought her home. No one appeared to greet them.

"Mother," he called, as he went through the house. In two remote rooms he found his mother and sister.

"Harriet is out there," said he.

"And we are here; we shall stay here," said his mother.

Israel looked abashed. He remembered afterwards that he saw a stove with pots and pans and dishes, and in the other room a bed, a table, and chairs. The two women had made all preparations for living by themselves.

And this was the bride's homecoming!

Yet the married two lived a happy life together. Israel felt keenly the mental misery his wife must endure, and strove to alleviate it by every kindly attention in his power, and she understood his motive, and resolutely hid all traces of pain. Life for each was as the other made it.

There was no communication between the two parts of the house, and no messages passed, no visits were exchanged.

For two years, when a baby was born. Then one day, Harriet said to Israel: "Take the baby, and go to your mother." He understood, and taking the child in his arms, went and knocked at the door.

"Who is it?" said his mother's voice.

"Your son and grandson," he replied.

There was a slight noise and a pause within. Then Amanda said, "We are too busy to see you."

He returned, and laid the baby by the fire, and said, "I do not need to—

—the eye."

By. One wife to him. He had some nice her. Baby out in the world.

It'll do the forough

"Sounds like a dog," said Amanda. But when the door opened, in to the room, she was on the floor caressing, kissing the little one. Blighted Amanda leaned on her broom bewildered, looking at this strange happening. And Israel and Harriet, hastening after the child, stood in the doorway witnessing the first step in a reconciliation.

"It's Israel over again!" she cried.

In a moment she was on the floor caressing, kissing the little one. Blighted Amanda leaned on her broom bewildered, looking at this strange happening. And Israel and Harriet, hastening after the child, stood in the doorway witnessing the first step in a reconciliation.

"Come to mamma, Israel," said Harriet to the child. He looked at her, laughing, over his grandmother's shoulder.

"Turn to mamma," he repeated, taking a step and pulling at her finger.

The widow hesitated but a moment between mother's love and hard, stern pride. "I will," said she firmly. "And, Manda, put down your broom and come too."

Then, led by the little trustee, she came toward Israel and Harriet.

"My children!" she cried.

Competent To Testify.

The other day Judge Brannah, of Rome, Ga., was attending superior court at Cedartown. One of the lawyers was examining a witness who was not the brightest individual in the world. The question arose as to whether the witness was competent to testify. So the lawyer thought he would make a test. He looked at the man. "Who made you?" he asked.

"Moses," answered the witness.

This satisfied the lawyer as to the incompetency of the witness, and he so argued. Then the witness turned to Judge Janes and asked:

"Judge, may I ask the lawyer a question?"

"Certainly," said Judge Janes.

"Well, Mr. Lawyer, who made you?"

The lawyer thought he would still further test the witness' competency, and promptly answered:

"Aaron made me."

The witness was delighted at the answer, and, pointing his finger at the lawyer, drawled out:

"Well, I've read that Aaron once made a calf, but I didn't ever expect to see his practicing at the law in this here."

The lawyer blushed, the court laughed and the question of the competency of the witness was affirmatively settled. Judge Brannah afterward went back to the court room, sought out the judge and told the story. His honor enjoyed the joke heartily, and himself laughed as loud as the dignity of the bench would allow.

Honor the Dear Old Mother.

Honor the dear old mother. Time has scattered the snowy flakes on her brow, but is she not sweet and beautiful now? The lips are thin and shrivelled, but those are the lips which have kissed many a moist tear from the childish cheeks, and they are the sweetest cheeks in the world. The eye is dim, yet it glows with soft radiance of holy love which can never fade. Ah, yes, she is a dear old mother. The sands of life are nearly run out, but feeble as she is, she will go further and reach down lower for you than any other upon earth. You cannot walk into a midnight where she cannot see you; you cannot enter a prison whose bars will keep her out; you cannot mount a scaffold so high for her to reach that she may kiss and bless you in evidence of her deathless love. When the world shall despise and forsake you, when it leaves you by the wayside to die unnoticed, the dear old mother will gather you in her feeble arms, and tell you of all your virtues until you almost forget that your soul is disfigured by vices. Love her tenderly and cheer her declining years with holy devotion.—Ex.

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